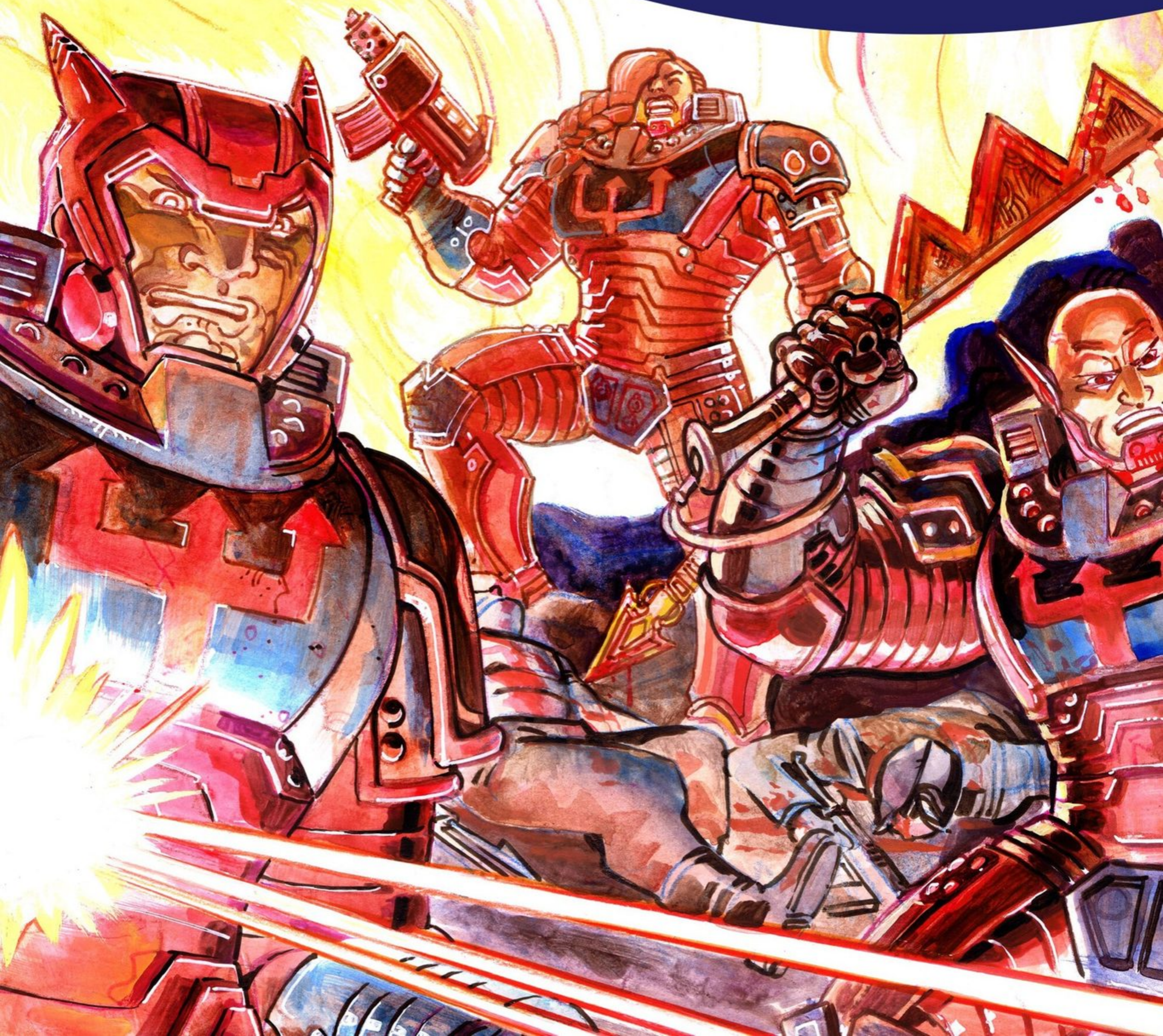




SITTERSON
DOUGHERTY
ASTONE
ESPOSITO

FIRE PLANET





In the wake of a grueling revolutionary war, the planet Lutheria has declared itself the first completely free planet in human history.

The planet's liberty is underwritten by the rare and potent fuel source orchaleum. However, that very resource has made Lutheria a target of the bellicose Orouran Empire. While the Freedom Guard has narrowly fended off attacks from Orouran spaceships, the Empire's heavily armed and armored marines are something else entirely...

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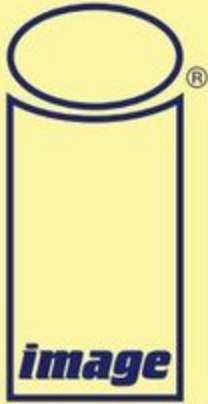
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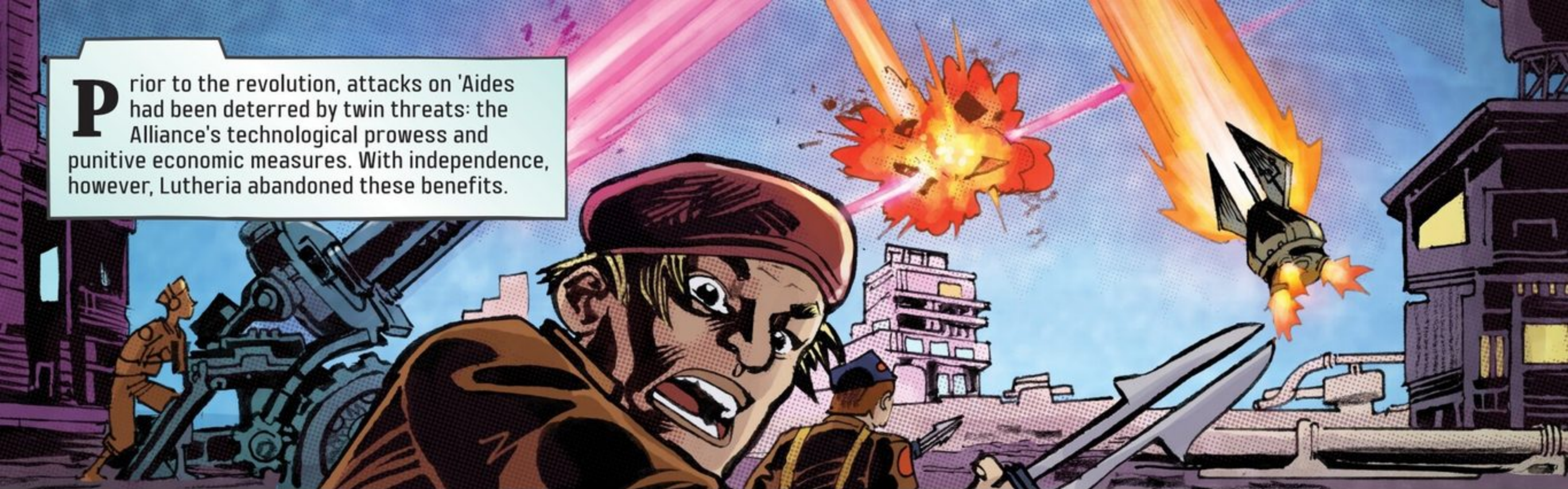


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NET

Prior to the revolution, attacks on 'Aides had been deterred by twin threats: the Alliance's technological prowess and punitive economic measures. With independence, however, Lutheria abandoned these benefits.



Out of necessity, Lutheria placed a premium on readiness and rapid response for the defense of critical infrastructure, including, inter alia, orchaleum extraction sites and refineries, cereal storage facilities, and spacefields.



To mitigate the impacts of its low population, the planet relied on a policy of universal conscription, with on-duty Civil Guard members reinforced, as necessary, by local reserve units in possession of their own munitions.



The above notwithstanding, the sparsely populated Lutheria--its equipment dilapidated and courting obsolescence--not infrequently found itself outmatched by even small bands of shock troops.



In these instances, the Luthorian Council would request terrestrial assistance from the Freedom Guard.



WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO LIVE IN GRACCHON'S DREAM MADE FLESH. FREEDOM IS OURS TO LOSE.

THOUGH WE'VE ALREADY PAID DEARLY, THIS FREEDOM COMES WITH AN ADDITIONAL COST, FOREVER DUE:

THE PRICE OF OUR LIBERTY IS VIGILANCE, BLOOD AND SACRIFICE.

THIS IS THE CHOICE WE'RE BLESSED TO MAKE, SUBMITTING TO THE DISCIPLINE THAT ANY MEANINGFUL FREEDOM DEMANDS.



Overpowered and under-resourced, diffused among a handful of cities and scattered communities, Luthieran defense prioritized on-the-ground tactical considerations and their requisite autonomy.



This approach has its antecedents in Alliance policy, which afforded significant latitude to its representatives as they spread out among the stars.



Travel costs and the enforced scarcity of ansibles made unit-based autonomy a necessity for the Alliance. Upon Lutheria, this autonomy took on more philosophical underpinnings.



Thus, the trust granted to the planet's military units--empowering them to act with a speed and decisiveness impossible for their more hierarchical rivals--became another expression of Luthieran freedom.



THE GREAT SUN HAS CHOSEN US TO BASK IN HIS RADIANT LIGHT. MAY HE GUIDE US THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

THOUGH SURROUNDED BY SLAVES...TO PASSION, TO MYTH, TO FREEDOMS FRIVOLOUS AND FLEETING...

...WE ARE SHIELDED BY OUR OBEDIENCE, BY THE DISCIPLINE HIS DIVINE WILL DEMANDS.

AND IT IS OUR SACRIFICE THAT GUARANTEES THE GREAT SUN'S PLAN, HIS DESTINY, THE LIGHT THAT WILL ONE DAY SHINE UPON THE GALAXY ENTIRE.

Standing in vivid contrast to Lutheran and Alliance tactics, the Imperial commitment to broader, strategic concerns was made feasible by its seemingly inexhaustible population.

For while the Lutheran populace was rare and precious--in senses quantitative and cultural--Oruran souls were cheap, easily replaced, and spent freely by the Empire's rigid leadership structure.

Just as the government of Old Earth sent its excess population to colonize worlds, the Empire used its to conquer them, extending its reach and providing an additional infusion to its already considerable numerical superiority.

These vast numbers--which also informed the Oruran hierarchy and fundamentalist state religion--empowered the Empire to define acceptable losses exceptionally broadly, especially when sustained in the pursuit of larger strategic objectives.



WE SHOULD BE HEATING THE SAMPLE ALREADY.

I'M ON IT, BUT...

...THIS MAKES ME UNCOMFORTABLE, KATJA.

HAS IT BEEN THAT LONG SINCE YOU DID LAB WORK?

Upon the Alliance discovery of orchaleum, 'Aides received an influx of investment and immigration, driven by the galaxy's largest energy conglomerates, the Universal Power Corporation and Future Shock Energy.



IT'S NOT THAT.

DON'T LET IT FOAM.



THAT MUCH POWER COULD...



BEFORE THE CATAclysm--

BABY, WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS.



WE'RE INVENTING A WORLD FREE FROM COGGER SUPERSTITION.

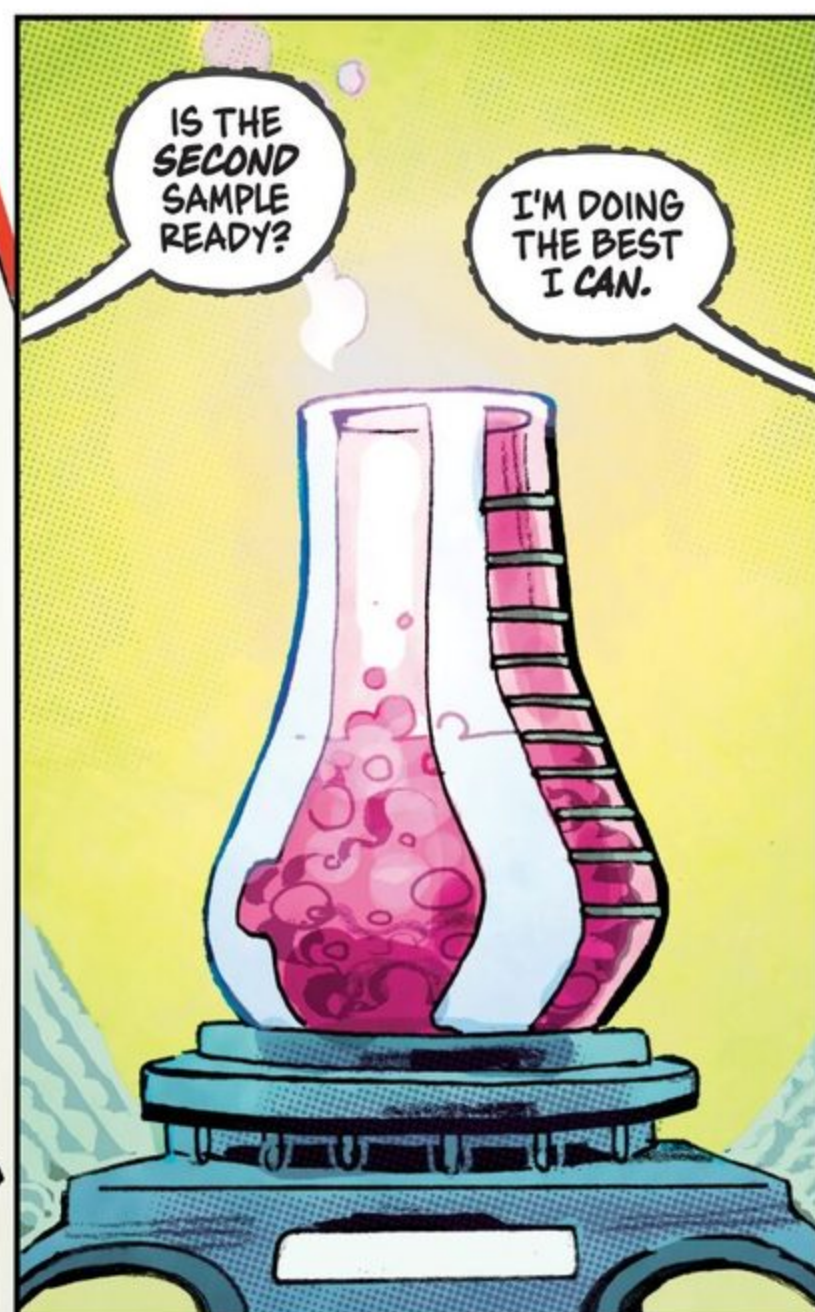
Technicians from across the Alliance flocked to the remote planet, enticed by financial inducements, increased freedom, and reduced regulatory oversight.

MAKE A FRESH START ON EXOTIC 'AIDES!
WITH THE UNIVERSAL POWER CORPORATION!
ALL RELOCATION COSTS COVERED!
NEWLY BUILT, LUXURY HOUSING AVAILABLE NOW!
CURRENTLY SEEKING:

• Physicists
• Geophysicists
• Biologists

• Microbiologists
• Anthropologists
• Medical Doctors
• Reservoir

The result was an urban population of highly educated and well-compensated experts, juxtaposed with the destitute working classes responsible for drawing orchaleum forth from the planet's crust.



IS THE SECOND SAMPLE READY?

I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN.

Despite benefitting from corporate investment, these technicians began to chafe at how their discoveries and research were harnessed for the benefit of exclusively off-world interests.

THERE'S
ALREADY
BEEN TOO MUCH
DEATH.

THAT'S
EXACTLY
MY POINT.

AN ORCHA
BOMB WILL END
THIS WAR, SAVING
LIVES IN THE
PROCESS.

ONCE IDA
SEES THE POWER
WE CAN WIELD,
THEY'LL COME
TO TERMS.

OR IT'LL
MAKE RETAKING
'AIDES AN EVEN
BIGGER PRI--

BASIL!
THE
SAMPLE!

QUICK!
GET IT OFF
THE--

When wildcat strikes broke out at rural extraction and refinery sites, the technician class was keen to become involved.

Thus, a practical working-class rebellion was transformed into an idealistic middle-class revolution.





SHKKKH

...I...CAN'T
SHKKKH...

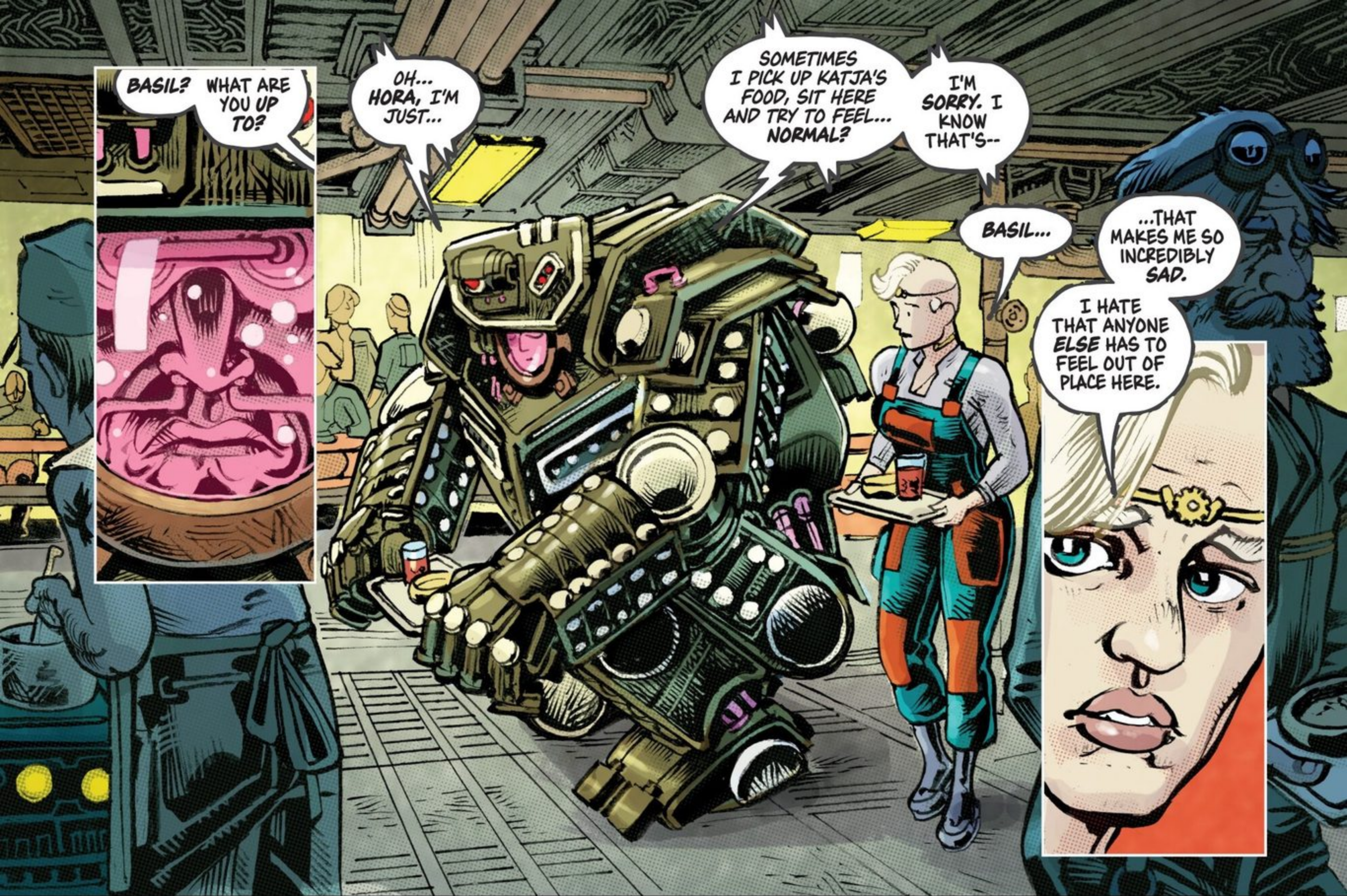
SHKKKH

BASIL,
I...

...BREATHE...!

BASIL...?!

BASIL!



BASIL? WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

OH... HORA, I'M JUST...

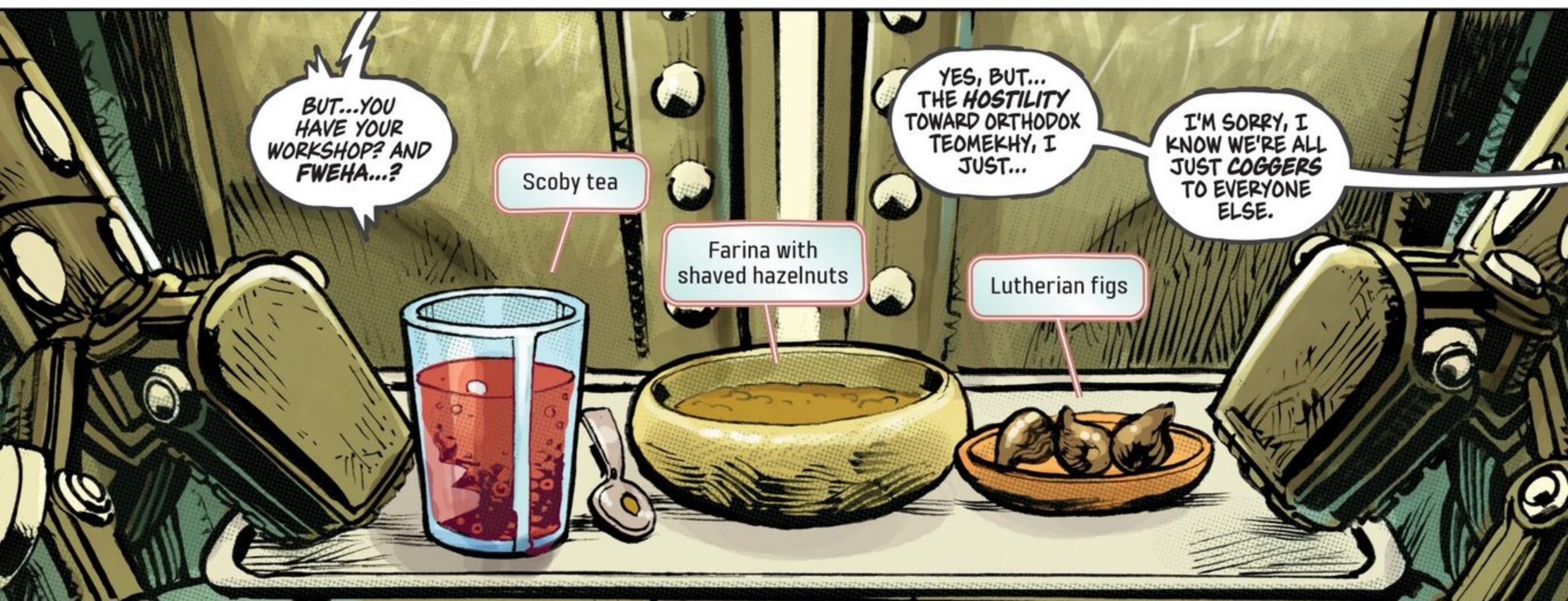
SOMETIMES I PICK UP KATJA'S FOOD, SIT HERE AND TRY TO FEEL... NORMAL?

I'M SORRY. I KNOW THAT'S--

BASIL...

...THAT MAKES ME SO INCREDIBLY SAD.

I HATE THAT ANYONE ELSE HAS TO FEEL OUT OF PLACE HERE.



BUT...YOU HAVE YOUR WORKSHOP? AND FWEHA...?

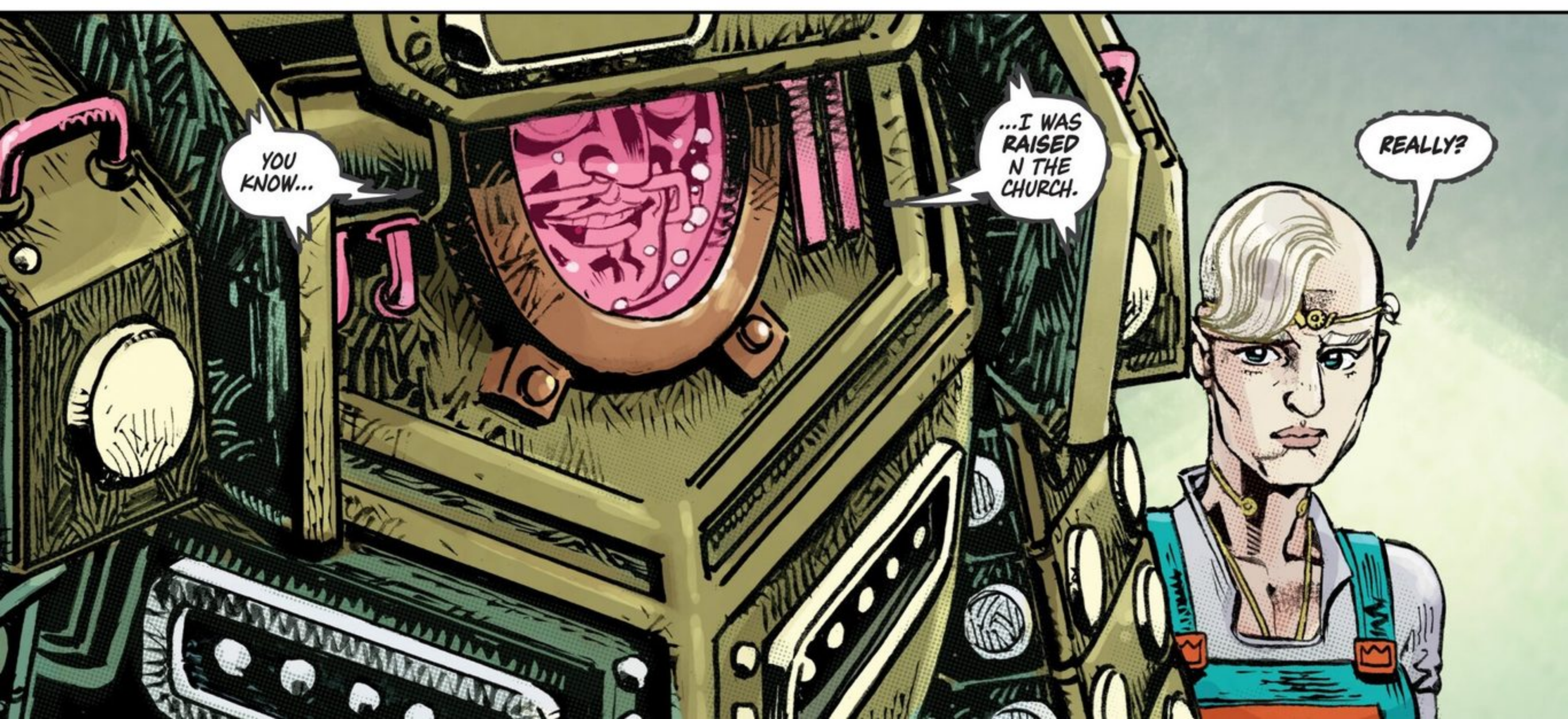
Scoby tea

Farina with shaved hazelnuts

Lutherian figs

YES, BUT... THE HOSTILITY TOWARD ORTHODOX TEOMEKHY, I JUST...

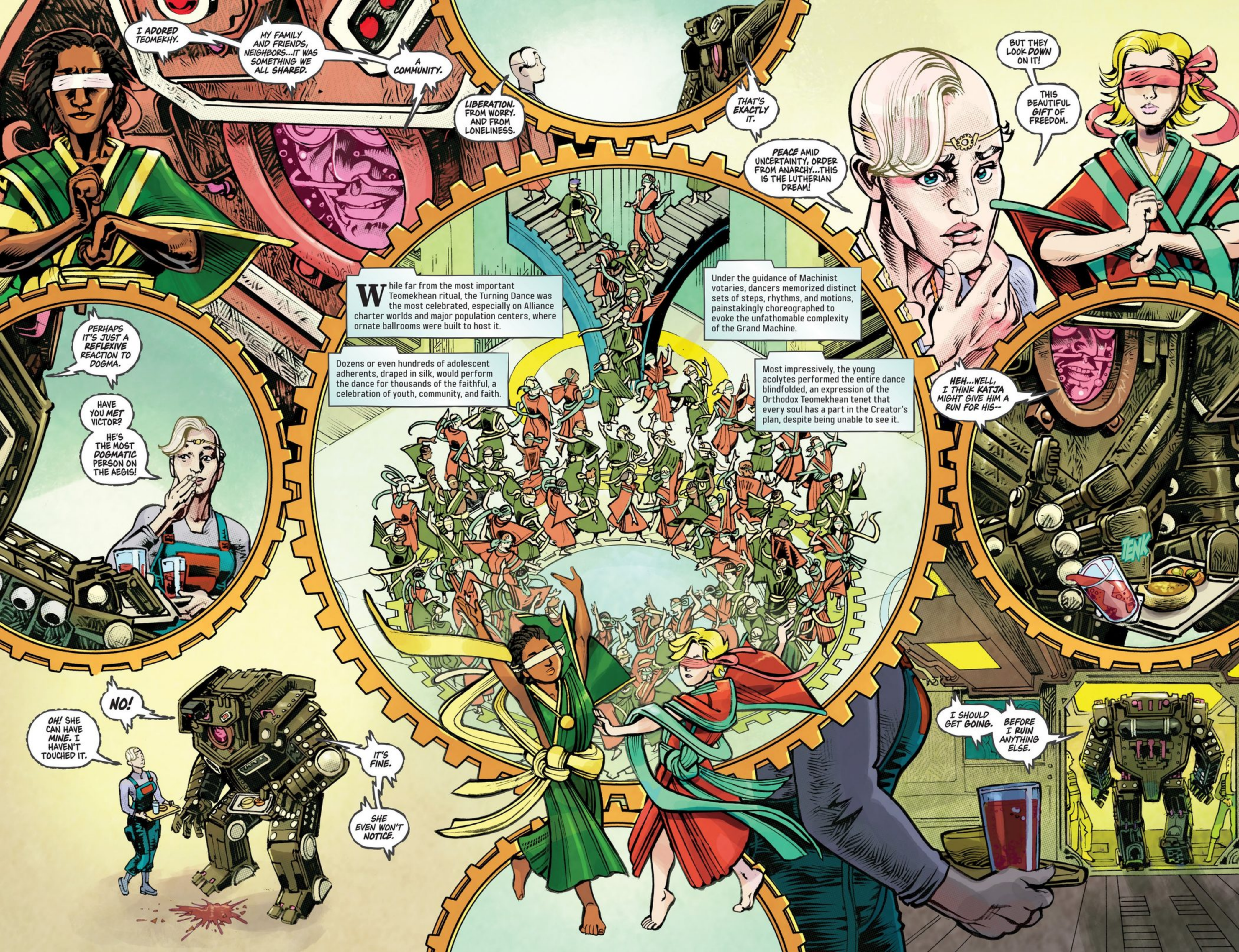
I'M SORRY, I KNOW WE'RE ALL JUST COGGERS TO EVERYONE ELSE.



YOU KNOW...

...I WAS RAISED IN THE CHURCH.

REALLY?



I ADORED TEOMEKHY.

MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS...IT WAS SOMETHING WE ALL SHARED.

A COMMUNITY.

LIBERATION. FROM WORRY. AND FROM LONELINESS.

THAT'S EXACTLY IT.

PEACE AMID UNCERTAINTY, ORDER FROM ANARCHY...THIS IS THE LUTHERIAN DREAM!

BUT THEY LOOK DOWN ON IT!

THIS BEAUTIFUL GIFT OF FREEDOM.

PERHAPS IT'S JUST A REFLEXIVE REACTION TO DOGMA.

HAVE YOU MET VICTOR?

HE'S THE MOST DOGMATIC PERSON ON THE AEGIS!

While far from the most important Teomekhean ritual, the Turning Dance was the most celebrated, especially on Alliance charter worlds and major population centers, where ornate ballrooms were built to host it.

Dozens or even hundreds of adolescent adherents, draped in silk, would perform the dance for thousands of the faithful, a celebration of youth, community, and faith.

Under the guidance of Machinist votaries, dancers memorized distinct sets of steps, rhythms, and motions, painstakingly choreographed to evoke the unfathomable complexity of the Grand Machine.

Most impressively, the young acolytes performed the entire dance blindfolded, an expression of the Orthodox Teomekhean tenet that every soul has a part in the Creator's plan, despite being unable to see it.

HEH...WELL, I THINK KATJA MIGHT GIVE HIM A RUN FOR HIS--

NO!

OH! SHE CAN HAVE MINE. I HAVEN'T TOUCHED IT.

IT'S FINE.

SHE EVEN WON'T NOTICE.

I SHOULD GET GOING.

BEFORE I RUIN ANYTHING ELSE.



NNNGH...

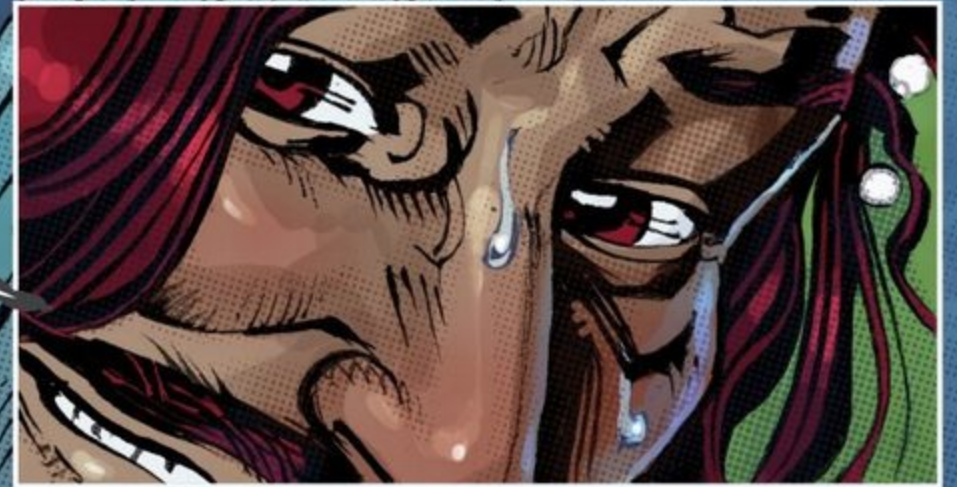
JACKSON?

ARE YOU UNWELL?

JUST SAMPLING SOME... CONTRABAND.

Artificial intelligence was a quagmire for the Alliance, which was caught between the profit drive of the conglomerate Augnostica and the proscriptions of the Teomekhean Church.

ARE YOU REAL... REALLY CHECKING IN ON THE TERRORIST?



YOU HELPED ME WHEN I WAS DAMAGED IN LIBERATION. NO ONE ELSE EVEN NOTICED.

HURT.

ONLY THINGS GET DAMAGED, TALUN. PEOPLE GET HURT.

YOUR NEW ARM...IT'S GREAT.

FWEHA WAS VERY PROUD.



While not as direct as Augnostica's financial support, the Church contributed on the cultural front, imparting moral value to the compliance upon which Alliance society was predicated.



URPT...

GLORIA WOULD NOT BE PLEASED ABOUT THIS.

SURE...

...BUT IS THAT WOMAN EVER PLEASED?

SHE SUBSCRIBES TO THE GRACCHON SCHOOL OF TEMPERANCE.

Ultimately, this impasse was addressed by A.I. itself, with its unacceptable risk to Alliance hegemony revealed by the usage test case's defection to the 'Aides insurrection and christening of themselves "Talun."

THE WARRIOR
ASCETIC! GRACCHON
AND HIS PHILOSOPHY,
ALL THE BACKFLIPS AND
CONTORTIONS...

...JUST
TO EXPLAIN WHY HIS
FREEDOM WAS WORTH
FIGHTING, WORTH DYING
FOR, BUT DUMUZID'S
AIN'T.

THEY THINK
LUTHERIA CAN
SURVIVE IN A VACUUM,
SAME AS THEY WALL
OFF PARTS OF
THEMSELVES THEY
DON'T LIKE.

I DRINK.
AFTER A FIGHT,
I NEED TO FEEL
ALIVE. WHOLE.
VISCERAL.
CARNAL.

OUR PASSIONS,
OUR IMPULSES...
THEY'RE PART OF US.
IGNORING THEM'S
WORSE THAN NAIVE. IT'S
SELF-DEFEATING.

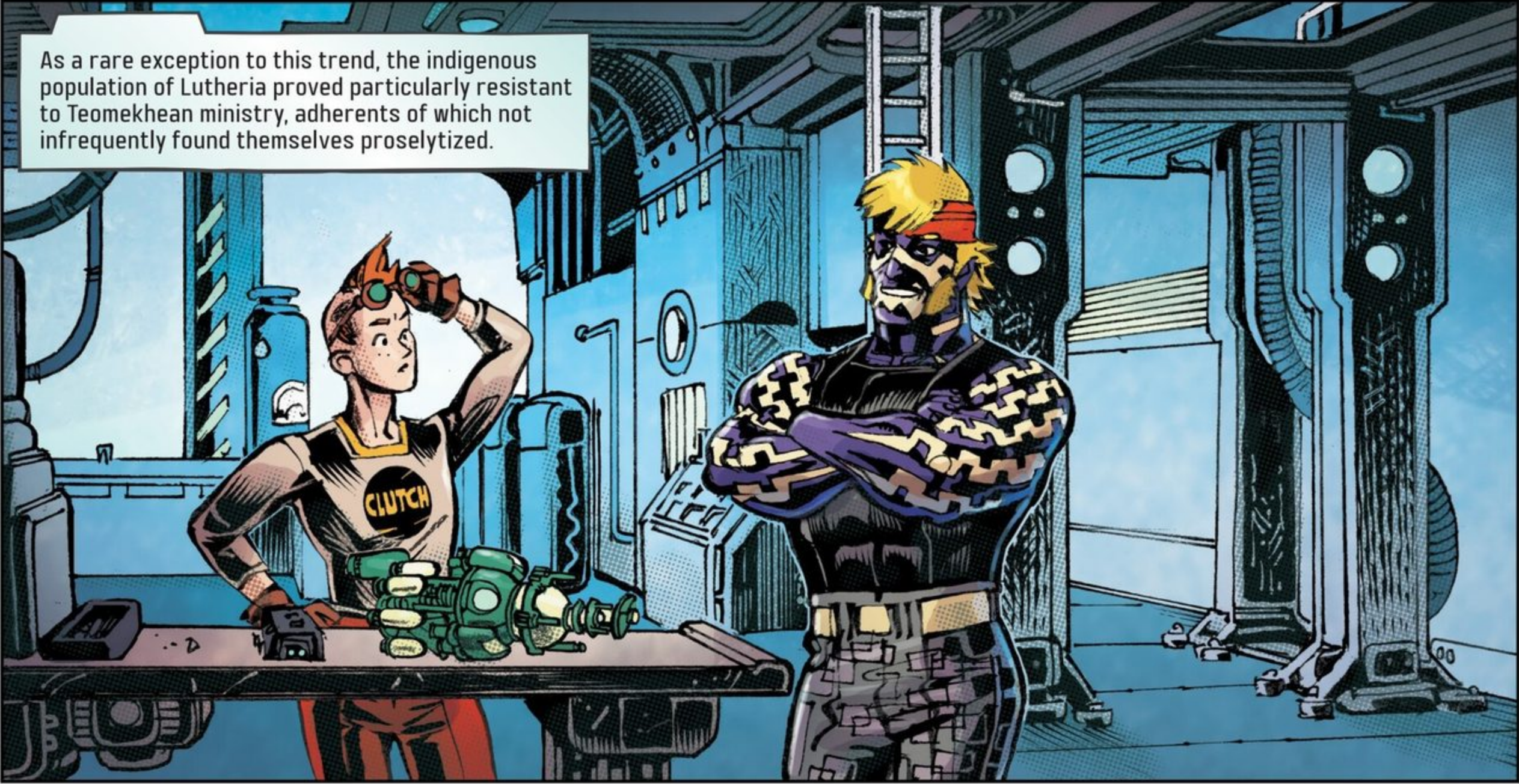
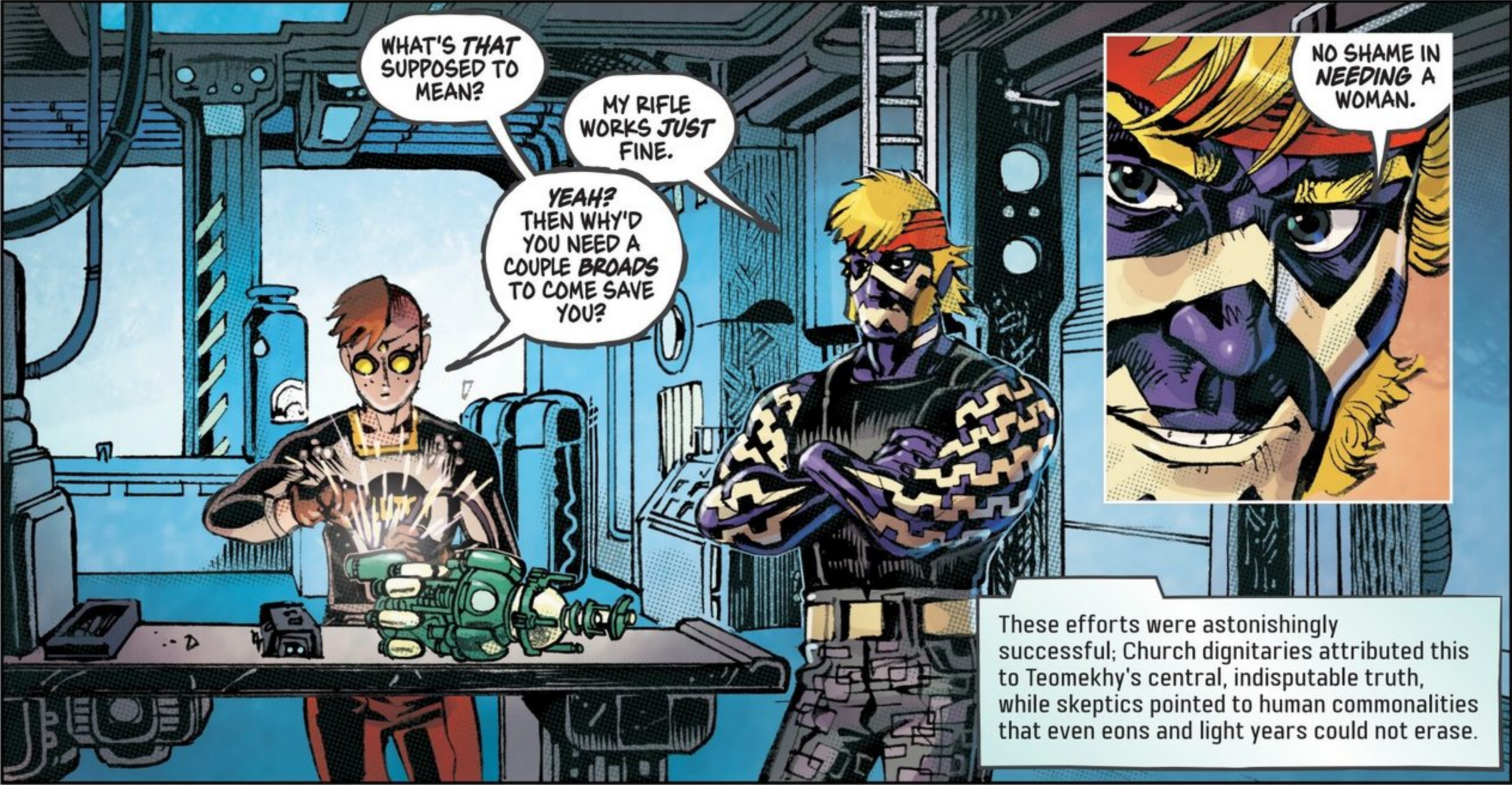
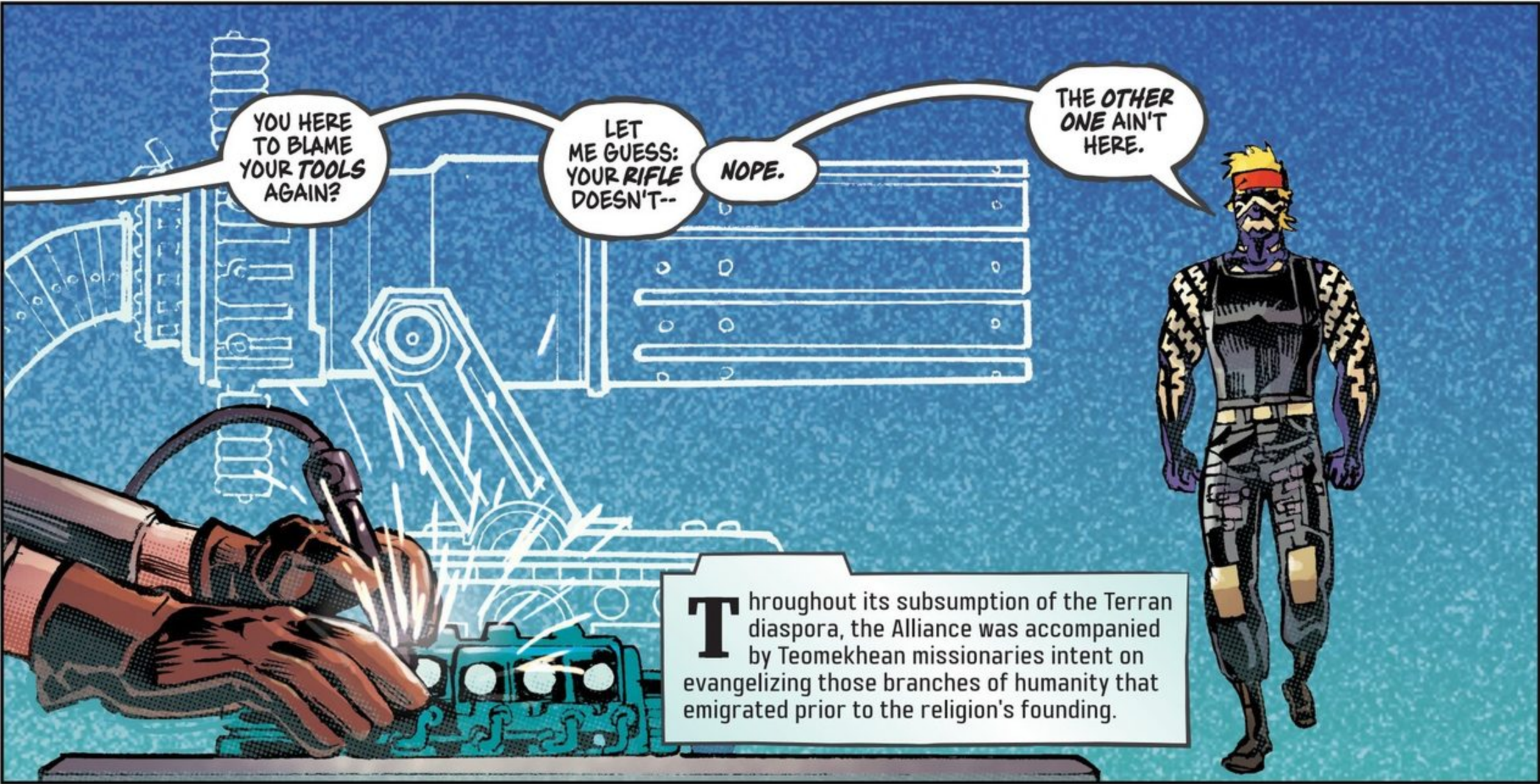
FREEDOM, REAL
FREEDOM...IT SCARES
THEM. SO THEY CLING TO
ALLIANCE MORALITY.
ALLIANCE RULES AND
SENSIBILITIES.

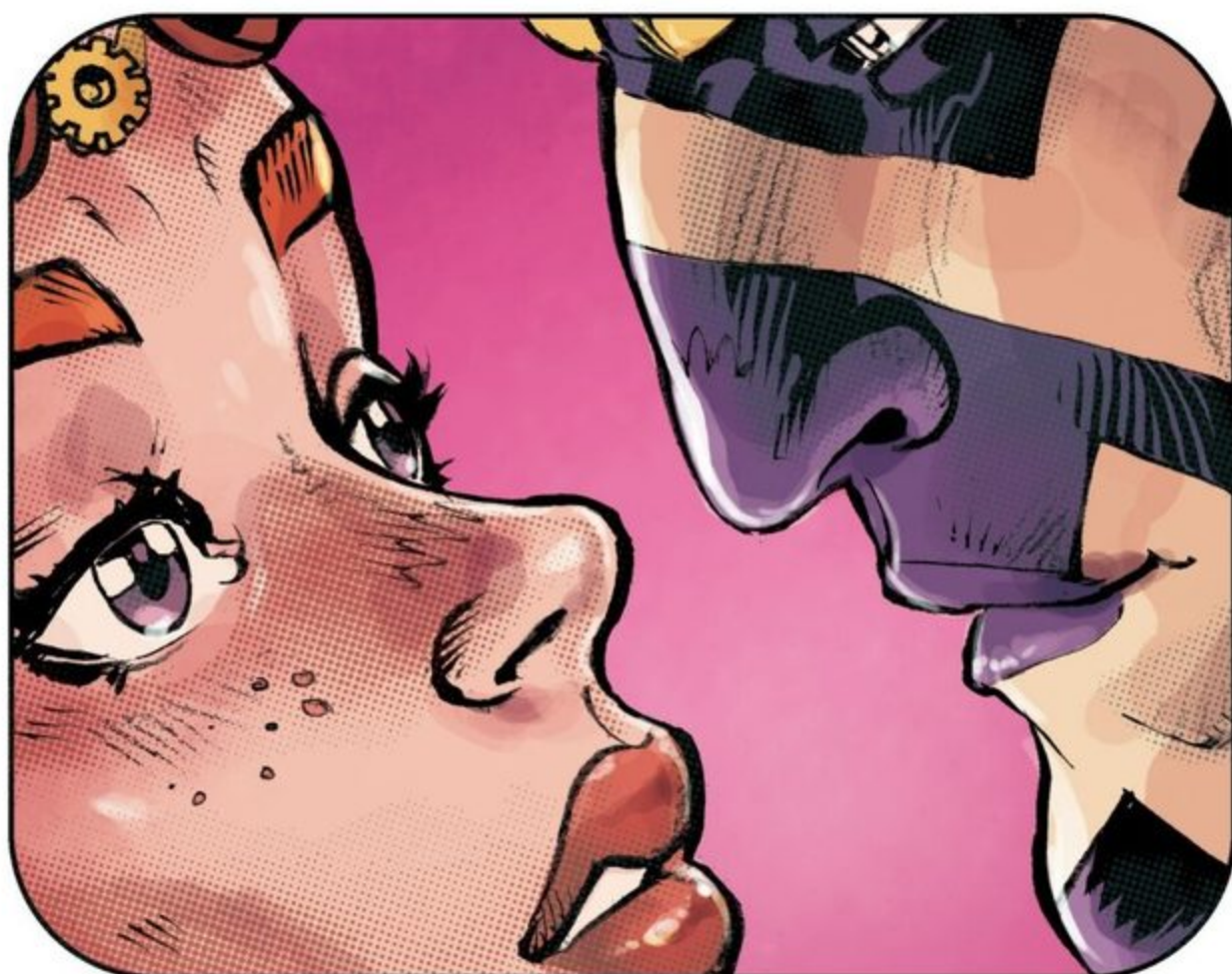
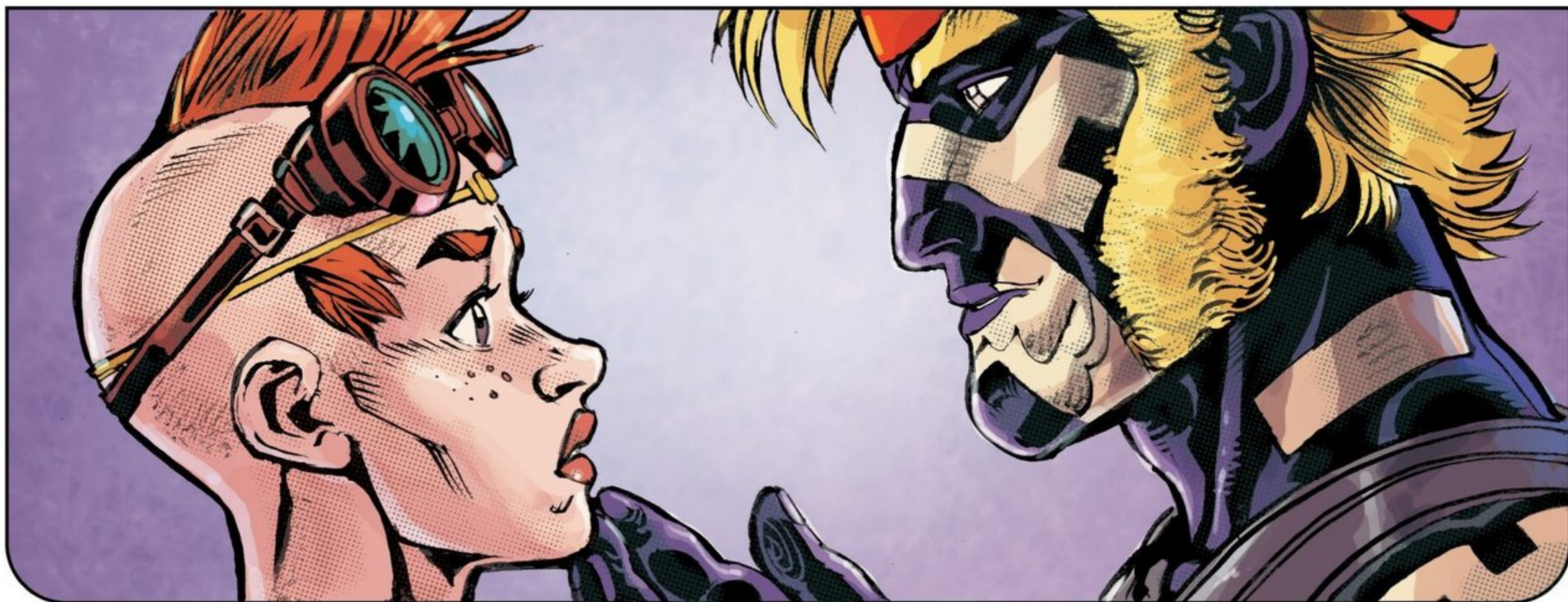
TO BE
FREE IS TO BE
WHOLLY HUMAN, TO
EMBRACE EVERY PART
OF OURSELVES, THE
GOOD AND BAD...

...BECAUSE
IT'S OUR
FAILINGS...

...OUR
IMPERFECTIONS...

...THAT
MAKE US
HUMAN.







YOU
SENSUALIST
BRUTE!

WHAT'S WRONG
WITH YOU?! I'M
A MACHINIST!



AND
ACCORDING TO
YOUR LITTLE
BUDDY...

...WE'RE
SIBLINGS.

SISTER
BEAR.



IT'S ONE
THING TO
KNOW WHO
YOU ARE...

...EVEN TO
KNOW YOUR
PLACE...

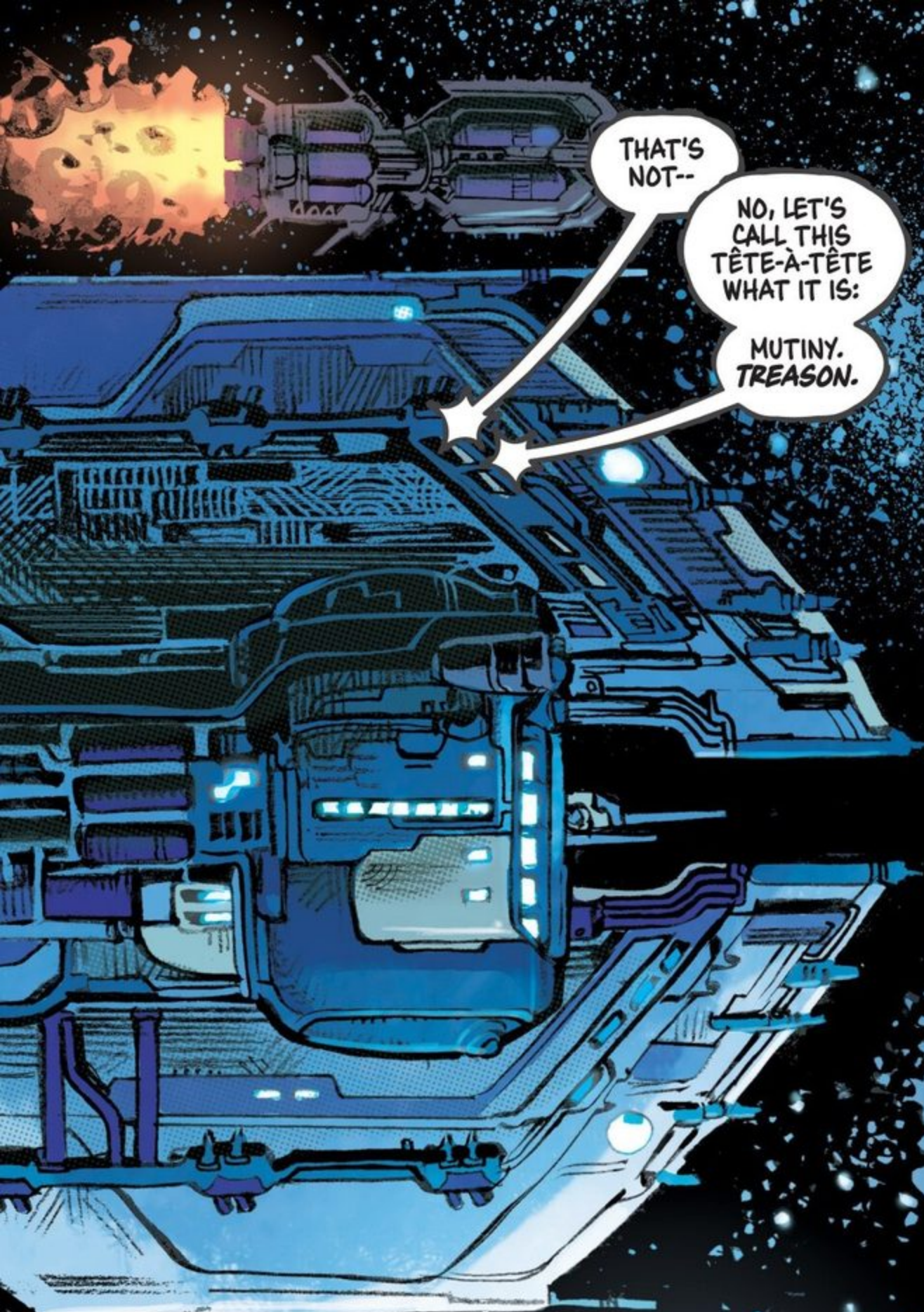
The Macliu clan system received rapid buy-in due to the obvious benefits of a planet-wide mutual support group as well as its perception as a distinctly Lutheran institution.



In its pursuit of "clans without clannishness," the system's solitary proscription was on intraclan romance, a measure intended to ensure amicable relationships between the three groups.



...BUT I
NEVER TOOK
YOU FOR THE
OBEDIENT
TYPE.



THAT'S NOT--

NO, LET'S CALL THIS TÊTE-À-TÊTE WHAT IT IS:

MUTINY. TREASON.



I'M YOUR COMMANDING OFFICER.

SO THIS COMES FROM THE ADMIRAL?



I'LL HANDLE MACLIU.

BUT FIRST, I NEED YOUR COMMITMENT.



WHY ME? I'M A CORPORAL.

BECAUSE YOU'RE YOU. THE OTHER PILOTS RESPECT YOU.



WE'RE ON THE CUSP OF A NEW WORLD, MARCUS.

A CHANCE TO RIGHT WRONGS, TO BRING REAL JUSTICE TO 'AIDES.

IT WAS YOU LEAVING THE PAMPHLETS AROUND.



SO YOU'VE READ THEM. THEN YOU UNDERSTAND--

GLORIA, I'M A MARINE.

ALL THIS PHILOSOPHY'S OVER MY HEAD.

Freedom's Tyrant
vol 6
Oliver Gracchon

SPARE ME THE "AW SHUCKS" ACT.

YOU DON'T CASUALLY DROP "TÊTE-À-TÊTE" AND GET TO PLAY DUMB.

GLOR--

NO...

This is more than just riots and unrest. The uprising has real support and, without MacLiu's fleet, the Alliance can't stop it.

But, if things escalate, it'll end like Dumuzid; do you want that blood on your hands? Battering freedom into obedience, lining corporate pockets...is that why you enlisted?

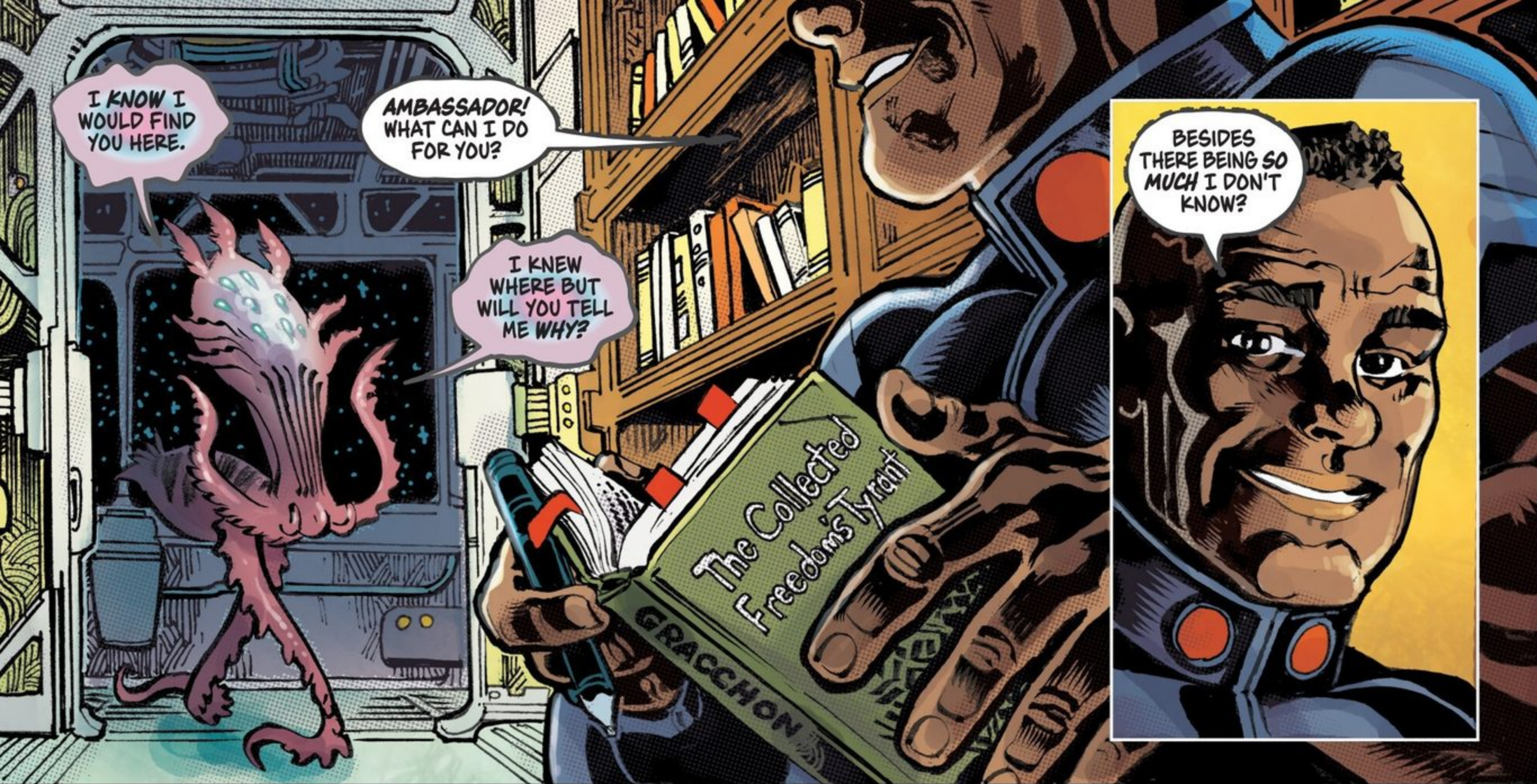
This can work, Mookie. We can change things, build a new world. But first, we have to neutralize the Alliance's on-planet command, we have to seal the planet to reinforcements...

And, to do that, we need your pilots.

I CAN'T PUT MY PEOPLE IN RECKLESS, POINTLESS DANGER.

THEN IT SEEMS LIKE YOUR DUTY'S CLEAR:

YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE WE WIN.



I KNOW I WOULD FIND YOU HERE.

AMBASSADOR! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I KNEW WHERE BUT WILL YOU TELL ME WHY?

BESIDES THERE BEING SO MUCH I DON'T KNOW?

In the Cataclysm's wake, all that remained of Old Earth's wisdom was dispersed among the stars. Ownership of humanity's intellectual heritage, however, was summarily claimed by the rediscovering expeditions' corporate sponsors.



It was during a conflict over these rights that Gowtan's Hokarn Library burned, incinerating its collection of irreplaceable pre-Dispersion tomes. Far Star Security purported the arson to have been committed by unidentified terrorists.



WITH EVERYTHING AN ENGAGEMENT DEMANDS OF US...

...ONCE IT'S ALL OVER, READING CALMS ME.

MOOKIE, I WILL BE SAD TO INFORM YOU THAT CONFLICT HAS NOT ENDED.

THE INFANTRY DROP...

...THE ORCHALEUM RAID...

...THESE ARE FEINTS TO GAUGE REACTION TIMES.



I'M SORRY,
AMBASSADOR...

IS THIS A
PREDICTION
BASED ON WHAT
YOU'VE SEEN OR
SOMETHING YOU
KNOW?

WOULD IT MAKE A
DIFFERENCE?

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK?



I...I
DON'T
KNOW?

WHAT A
TREAT!

TO LIVE
WITHOUT THE
SHACKLES OF
FOREKNOWLEDGE!

TO BE
TRULY
FREE!

*To be
continued.*

FREEDOM'S TYRANT, VOL III

AN EXCERPT

BY OLIVER GRACCHON

Thus, our calling is made clear to us: We must forge a just society, one in which we are, each of us, free to achieve our full potential. This dream is shared by each member of the human race, only ever twisted and perverted by the subjugation of one man's freedom to another's enrichment.

However, before we can discuss what is necessary to create a just society in all its complexity, we must first discover what makes a man just. For how can any of us create justice – from which freedom inevitably springs – if we ourselves remain unjust?

Think now of man's universal tendency to work against his best interests, to be inconsistent and self-destructive: When we act impulsively, when we surrender to sloth and gluttony, when we fail to consider the lives of our compañeres. If man were but a single thing, he would be rightfully considered unreliable, dangerous, insane.

This is the dim view of mankind held by the Interplanetary Development Alliance and Ouroran Empire alike, that no one can be trusted, that we all require oppressive systems and hierarchies to prevent an inevitable descent into chaos, violence, pandemonium. But we – lovers of mankind, one another and ourselves – reject this worldview.

How then do we explain man's inconsistencies, our embarrassing self-destructive tendencies? Simply, with the inescapable truth that man is not one single

thing but, rather, three components, interconnected and interdependent: Mind, body and spirit. It is the failure of these components to work together that is the source of all injustice within man. And it is that injustice that makes us slaves to our most base desires and impulses.

To better understand how to cultivate justice within ourselves, let us now look to the ways in which we debase ourselves with injustice.

Lack of restraint, impulsive behavior, rageful and morose dispositions. All these hinder our goals, they prevent us from



Gracchon's pamphlets, with their simple, straightforward prose, received an enthusiastic response from 'Aides' largely undereducated extraction workers.



Even after all-night war council meetings, Commander Gracchon was a fixture at dawn physical training.

accomplishing our dreams, from achieving that which we desire, from reaching our full potential. They are failures of the spirit, sins of the undisciplined man, unwilling to master his immediate, bestial impulses.

Similarly, failures of the body: Gluttony and sloth, physical weakness, an inability to withstand the pressures of the material world. They are stumbling blocks on the road to our purpose, our destiny; they plague us when we refuse to marshal our bodies, to command them to do that at which they are best, to cultivate the unyielding strength that existence, accomplishment and, most of all, freedom demand of us.

Naturally, the unjust man is also restricted by failures of the mind: Disregard for the effects of our actions, their impact on our compañeres, and the very nature of our potential. But while sins of the spirit and body are failures of excess – in which our urges and weaknesses are given free rein – sins of the mind are failures of deficiency, in which we do not use our mind for its best purpose or to its full potential.

That distinction holds the key to escaping unjust behavior, to casting off the chains that bind us to our most base instincts. Failures of both the spirit and body consist of a lack of guidance, of control, of foresight and deliberate action. Our powerful bodies, our unconquerable spirits; they can move mountains and create worlds, but they need a guiding force, a limiting element, in order that they might reach their potential, that we might win our freedom and achieve our destiny.

Just as each of us longs to do that at which mankind excels, that which only mankind can accomplish, achieving justice and perfect freedom, so too do our component

parts long to do that at which they are best. Therefore, the role of the mind becomes clear: To seize control, to harness the spirit and command the body. For, if not the mind, what other component of man can be trusted to chart a course through the storm?

Each of us must cultivate, must hone, must train our minds in order that our minds, in turn, may cultivate, hone, and train our bodies and spirits for the challenges that await us. Without rules and guidelines, concepts of right action, principles of expediency, we are left with only a child's conception of freedom: A life unfulfilling and devoid of accomplishment, the secure enslavement of the Empire's citizens only a more honest version of the Alliance's worship of wealth and subjugation to excess.

In order that we might create justice in the world, that we might win freedom for our compañeres, we must first make ourselves perfectly just, or else risk being forever enslaved by our instincts and impulses. To accomplish this noble task, our bodies and spirits need guidelines, they require laws to keep them on the righteous but narrow path to freedom.

To win our freedom, individually and collectively, our minds must become lawgivers. We must make of them tyrants of our bodies and spirits, for who else but a tyrant is capable of seizing control, of bringing order to chaos, of replacing indulgence with discipline?

SUBMIT QUESTIONS
regarding Lutheran history to
DrAldousFoyroushi@AtlantisStillSunk.com

QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

WITH DR. ALDOUS FOYROUSHI

I hope this finds you invigorated and challenged by the ongoing FREE PLANET project. In particular, I look forward to hearing your feedback on this month's essay. While it is always a joy to regale you – our brilliant and engaged readership – with my own detailed accountings of Lutheran history, there is much to be gained by grappling with primary sources. Only by immersing ourselves, not just in recorded history, but in the words and voices of those who lived and made it, can we gain a full and robust understanding of historical events, what shaped them, and even what they mean in a broader sense. This deeply held conviction sits at the core of our approach on the FREE PLANET project.

Should the preceding passage from Oliver Gracchon's renowned and influential *Freedom's Tyrant* pamphlets be well-received, with no one feeling slighted by the omission of an original essay, we will certainly endeavor to include more period documentation in future installments of FREE PLANET.

Without further ado...

Howdy, Dr. Aldous,

Not sure I have any questions but I definitely need some more Lutheran history in my life. If you are able to oblige, it would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

James

James, as you have likely already gathered, I am more than happy to continue rendering unto you and your fellow readers a full library's worth of Lutheran history. While this letters page has already hosted some truly astounding and detailed missives, I encourage you not to be overwhelmed or intimidated. It is a cliché because it is

true: There are no stupid questions. What's more, succinct queries are always welcome. To wit, the following trio of letters:

Dear Dr. Foyroushi,

What was life in the galaxy like before the rise of the IDA?

Best,

Sam Wilson

Thank you, Sam. To my point above, with merely a baker's dozen of words, you have cast a light on one of the most fascinating, complex aspects of the human diaspora. In a word, the answer is: Multifarious.

At the time of the Interplanetary Development Alliance's founding, humanity was spread across the stars, cousins estranged by time and distance. For millennia, human civilization had splintered, shattered and reformed itself in configurations both shocking and familiar, with cultural and biological evolution shaped by dramatically divergent circumstances on individual planets. As a result, it would take full volumes to comprehensively discuss life across the universe in the days preceding the Alliance's rise. That said, in a few short months, you'll have an opportunity to witness first hand diasporic life prior to Alliance involvement.

The one exception to the multifarious state of human society and culture in the time before the Alliance's institution were what became the Charter Worlds. Owing to a confluence of factors – close proximity, early colonization, similar planets, resource-rich environments, development of space travel, etc. – these worlds shared extensive cultural similarities, allowing them to form the bedrock of the Interplanetary Development Alliance.

Dear Dr. Foyroushi,

What does the average citizen think of the rebellion and advent of Lutheria? Is their access to information of the goings on in the galaxy limited by the IDA?

Thank you,

Jessica Morgan

Color me extremely impressed, Jessica. Not only did you ask a wonderful, insightful question, but you did me the favor of going a long way toward answering it yourself. As you have correctly pieced together, the Alliance – through its monopoly on both interstellar transportation and communications – was able to exert a tremendous amount of control over information of all kinds. In FREE PLANET #2, you can catch a glimpse of how Alliance outlets positioned and spoke about revolts and rebellions in the context of the twin news articles discussing Jackson Crater. As a result, the average Alliance citizen – even if sympathetic to the complaints of ‘Aides residents – typically viewed the actual revolution as unlawful, anarchic and a threat to Alliance security amid the increasing risks of Orouran invasion.

Dear Dr. Foyroushi,

How did civilization evolve from a Terran species locked on Old Earth in the ancient times to a massive interplanetary society?

Best,

Brandon Carter

While some of this information was covered in “Dispersion as Destiny: The Terran Diaspora,” found in FREE PLANET #2, you are right to clamor for more details, Brandon. The sad fact of the matter is that our knowledge of humanity’s time on Old Earth is extremely limited by the passage of millennia. While the Teomekhean Church claims to possess historical records from the era before the Cataclysm, this has never been confirmed, as access to the Church’s athenaeum is closely guarded.

Speaking in the broadest possible strokes,

however, the process went as follows:
1) Old Earth sends its “excess population” across the stars in slow-moving arks,
2) Old Earth is struck by the Cataclysm,
3) Humanity develops, thrives and dies in isolated pockets, 4) The Charter Worlds form the Alliance, 5) The Alliance rediscovers the human diaspora, bringing their distant relatives back into the fold. For more details on exactly how the Alliance accomplished this, do not miss FREE PLANET #7.

Dear Dr. Aldous Foyroushi,

I have really been enjoying your histories of ‘Aides/Lutheria. My first questions are about your doctorate. Is it like an Earth 21st century postdoctoral professorship? For that matter, if it is the case, of which nation on Earth would it be, as many of them have different higher education systems? Are you a medical doctor for whom history is a hobby or a second career? Which schools did you go to? Was your study just history? Or a more specific history of politics, interstellar travel, agriculture, interstellar agriculture, artificial intelligence or economics?

My first question about the people of ‘Aides/Lutheria is about the Surroko. Were the Surroko indigenous to ‘Aides/Lutheria? Were they like the Dumuzians, diaspora refugees that arrived on the planet from arks and were later rediscovered by the Alliance?

I have heard that The Freedom Guard used guns that were reflections of who they were as individuals. I wish the old comic books of 21st century of earth did that. I am not as familiar with the weapons of the Freedom Guard’s era and would like to see a graph or prose about them the way that we have for cereal sources, Lutheran orchaleum exportation, the moiety system, the history of Dumuzid, Orthodox and Reform Teomekhy, abandoned materials, and space travel.

On a related topic were there different ways of warfare, military structure and function between Alliance, Orouran, KOMBINAT, Quadro, Surroko and Far Star? In the same way that 20th and 21st century western nations had completely different militaries compared to their counterparts in the Soviet Union and post Soviet Russia, which the Soviets taught the Cubans?

Finally I want to know more about Jackson Crater. He is best known for bringing the KOMBINAT to a more aggressive phase, but did he also participate in any of its agitprop? I know that nearly every revolution and big historical event of any kind has a more radical and aggressive wing (the Irgun for Zionism, Andrew Jackson in the American Revolution, Russia for the W.W. II allies). I was curious which figure from earth's history most likely inspired Jackson and his activities or if any of them remind you of him? I was also curious if you think he physically resembles someone? Might his appearance have been inspired by a historical figure? For some reason, I get the feeling his appearance might have been inspired by someone from the French Resistance of WW II. Or maybe the Earth 20th and 21st century superhero Green Arrow aka Oliver Queen, who was similar in his grooming, devil may care attitude and, for the time, radical politics.

Thanks for your time,

Brandon Medina

Thank you, Brandon, for going above and beyond not only with your letter but with your overall engagement with everything you've been shown thus far. To answer your first question, I prefer to avoid the inclusion of my biographical information in the FREE PLANET project. We have worked exceptionally hard to provide to you an unbiased accounting, one that presents the facts in all their complexities, such that readers can draw their own conclusions. I worry that knowing additional information about your narrator might color your perceptions in unanticipated, unintended and unhelpful ways.

As for the Surroko, you are correct: Like native Dumuzians, the Surroko evolved from humans sent out from Old Earth during the Dispersion.

You can look forward to more detail about Surroko history and culture in FREE PLANET #9 and #10. We will also continue our exploration of varying military strategies and tactics (as begun in FREE PLANET #3) in next month's #6, so I remain wary of giving too much away here.

I am legitimately fascinated by the parallels you have drawn with regard to Jackson Crater. While it's exceedingly difficult to say what exactly inspired Crater, given his socioeconomic status and his planet of residence, it is highly unlikely that he had access to any Old Earth histories or comic books. Rather, Crater's actions – which began simply, with graffiti promulgating the views of the Industrial Laborers of the Galaxy's most radical wing – are best viewed as having been catalyzed by his unique and difficult experiences upon Dumuzid.

Finally, your interest in munitions is well noted; we will make sure to address it in sufficient detail in a future installment of the FREE PLANET project.

And thus, we have come to the conclusion of yet another Questions and Clarifications; an enormous show of gratitude to James, Sam, Jessica, Brandon and Brandon. If you would like to join this esteemed group of particularly dedicated and diligent readers, I encourage you to submit a question of your own. I remain at your service and eagerly await further opportunity to discuss the complexities of Lutheran history.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Aldous Foyroushi

SUBMIT QUESTIONS
regarding Lutheran history to
DrAldousFoyroushi@AtlantisStillSunk.com

NEXT ISSUE

Cover A



SITTERSON
DOUGHERTY
ASTONE
ESPOSITO

FREE PLANET NET



*"The price of freedom is
blood...either theirs or ours."*

Cover B

SEPTEMBER AT IMAGE



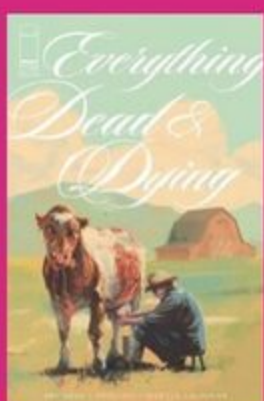
Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichson have already stunned together with *The Pride of Baghdad* in 2006, and have been working on ***Spectators*** for three years. It's about explicit sex and explicit violence, and how we relate to it as entertainment and life, via the metaphor of voyeuristic ghosts. I'll cut to the chase: I think this may be a masterpiece. Hell, even the stuff which I don't like is more interesting than most of the books I love. This is ambitious, audacious, and available in hardback.



Building on the previously excellent *Crave*, Maria Llovet's interests continue here – cautionary tales of technological advancement juxtaposed with human erotic life. ***Artificial*** takes AI romantic companions and puts them in an android body, with our lead chewing over the appeal of her all-too-human human ex versus this machine customised to her exact preference. The fear of the robot getting jealous is real: Ex-Terminator, if you will. Strong, and also – like all of Maria's work – hot.



Skinbreaker brings together Robert Kirkman [*Invincible*, *Walking Dead*] and David Finch [*Batman*, *New Avengers*] to tell a primal story of family in an alien culture. Kirkman keeps the story absolutely mythic in its simplicity – a father who knows his time is ending and a son who doesn't want to admit that – and sets the stage for Finch to transport you. His work is something else – drawn on double-sized boards, the pages are sumptuous, transporting you into this world with uncanny power.



Everything Dead & Dying has Tate Brombal [*Barbalien*, *Batgirl*] and Jacob Phillips [*That Texas Blood*, *Newburn*] exploring a quiet post-apocalypse. A farmer living among the rural ruins of a zombie apocalypse, alongside his husband, daughter and neighbours. All of whom are undead. Life goes on, even when life doesn't. A story about one man's refusal to admit the world has ended. I found this slice of unlife to be disturbing and haunting, which is exactly as it should be.



It starts with birds materializing. It ends with the death of the heavens. ***Closer*** is cosmic horror you can dance to, and a one-off apocalypse romance from Steve Lieber [*The Fix*, *Jimmy Olsen*], Tamra Bonvillian [*Once & Future*] and Kieron Gillen [*The Power Fantasy*, *The Writer of This Column*]. For those who are missing *Phonogram*, this is a trip back to the music-infused dark fantasy of the weirdest parts and, as a one-and-done, an absolute pop single.

Kieron Gillen writes ***The Power Fantasy***.

SPAWN VOID RIVALS GEIGER
RECKLESS EAST OF WEST I KILL GIANTS
THE WALKING DEAD I HATE FAIRYLAND
THE DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH SEX CRIMINALS
KILLADELPHIA
SAVAGE DRAGON BATTLE CHASERS
THE SACRIFICERS BLACK SCIENCE THE WICKED + THE DIVINE
MONSTRESS CHEW SWEET PAPRIKA
NOCTERRA
MOONSTRUCK UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY REDCOAT BUG WARS
DESCENDER PAPER GIRLS THE OLD GUARD
INVINCIBLE WANTED BITTER ROOT
STRAY DOGS WHAT'S THE FURTHEST PLACE FROM HERE SNOTGIRL
SAGA FERAL WITCHBLADE FRIDAY
CRIMINAL
EIGHT BILLION GENIES
FIRE POWER
GIDEON FALLS DIE
SPECTATORS
LITTLE MONSTERS
RAT QUEENS
RADIANT BLACK
ICE CREAM MAN
DECORUM BITCH PLANET
DEADLY CLASS
WORLDTR33
MIDDLEWEST
LITTLE BIRD
WE CALLED THEM GIANTS



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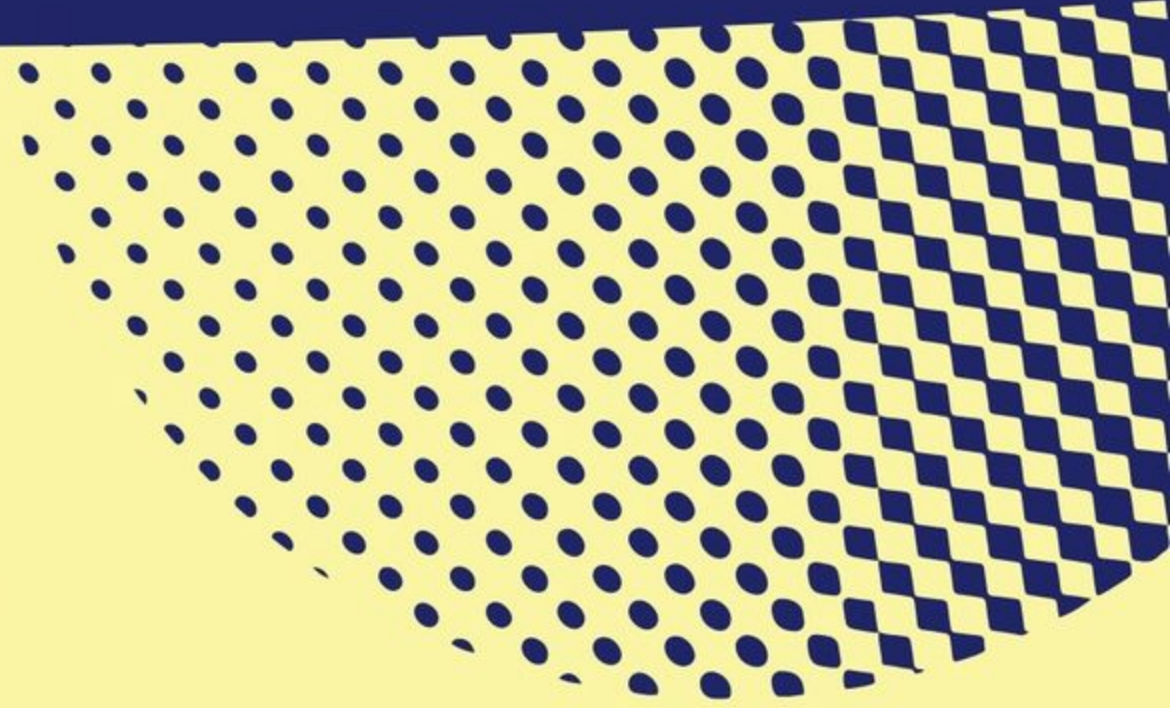
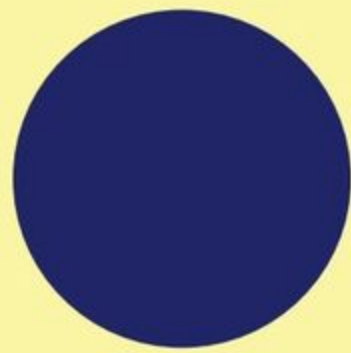
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“Peace amid uncertainty, order from
anarchy...this is the Lutheran dream!”

—*Hora Ha’Neel*

